

Preparing Your Landscape for Storms

No property is immune from the winds, rains and hurricanes of south Florida. We all must share in preparing our yards to keep each other safe. In addition to all the storm shutters, window treatments, loose outdoor furniture, pool items and roof concerns, the **LANDSCAPE** needs some attention.

Making our trees to look like large racks for hats, and our palms to look like tall poles with a fringe of fronds on top is far from proper preparation. These practices cause our trees and palms to become weaker and new growth to be more susceptible to breaking off in windstorms. What we want to do is have healthy, structurally sound plants that can best weather storms. Plants can even help to protect our homes and structures from damage if they are well placed and maintained. In forests, the trees at the edges take the strength of the winds and provide protection for the middle trees by causing the wind to be deflected over the area. With healthy, full urban forests, our community can also reduce damages by deflecting winds over our homes and properties. All it takes is healthier, well chosen, cared for trees for all.

To improve the health and storm preparedness of our landscapes, we usually need some professional help. As with roofing, or replacing old windows, or installing storm shutters, there are licensed and insured professionals for our landscapes. These are both Arborists for the trees and Landscape Maintenance Contractors for our landscapes. Make sure you **ASK** to see copies of Occupational licenses and Insurance Certificates **PRIOR** to having anyone do work on your property. One tree can be worth over \$10,000 if appraised, and with that kind of value at stake, it is worth assuring that you are hiring professionals.

To minimize the potential for landscapes to be liabilities, have an Arborist evaluate the health and structure of your trees and palms. They should be discussing the branch pattern, any cavities or wounds in the trunks, the amount and color of foliage and what maintenance will best help to improve your plants. To reduce the chances of wind throw (knocking over your trees/plants), you should be doing Crown Thinning and removal of dead, dying and diseased branches in all your landscape plants. You should also make sure that the cut branches and debris are going to be hauled away so there is not anything sitting nearby to be tossed around by the winds. Once we have been warned of a storm on it's way, it may be hard to get anyone to come by and clean up debris piles, so don't leave them lying around during hurricane season!



City of Miami Beach Department of Parks and Recreation Preparing Your Landscape For Storms and Hurricanes

The best time to prune your trees and palms is in the winter months when the growth is slower (except some fruit trees and/or flowering Trees that are in season in the winter). This allows for them to be growing and healthy through the hurricane season instead of being fresh cut. The rest of your landscape plants should usually have Crown Cleaning and removal of dead plant parts to improve their growth and health during the winter months also. Hurricane season corresponds with the growing season, so any structural pruning and/or thinning of trees and shrubs can cause reactionary growth instead of directing new growth to desired branches. That is not the desired results of your efforts

If you have additional questions, or want to find out more about caring for your trees, palms and landscape plants, call the following resources in our community: Miami Beach of Parks and Recreation Department at (305) 673-7730. Miami Dade County Cooperative Extension Agency (305) 246-3311. This brochure was written by Earth Advisors and funded by the City of Miami Beach Department of Parks and Recreation.

Call 305 673-7730 VOICE to request materials in accessible format, for sign language interpreters (5 days in advance when possible), or for information on access for persons with disabilities.

